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G.I.s. OR GERMANS?

At the Comisco Conference last week-end Mr. Morgan Phillips made the remarkable statement that the Labour Party is still undecided about German rearmament. It would have been franker to state that, although the Labour Party is just as deeply convinced as the German and French Socialists that German rearmament would be a tragic mistake, it is unwilling to risk an open break with the Americans on this issue. Whereas the French Government has so far refused to accept it even in principle, Mr. Bevin has reluctantly swallowed the principle on condition that the defence claims of the Western Union nations are given priority over those of the Germans. We believe that, in making this concession to the Pentagon, the Government has done nothing either to assist in the defence of Europe or to improve its relations with the U.S.A. Indeed, to accept the idea of German rearmament without rearming Germany is to get the worst of both worlds: it is to take a grave political risk without obtaining any corresponding military advantage. On this point, the French Assembly's attitude is perfectly correct; and it is a pity - to say the least of it - that Mr. Bevin has not stood staunchly by the French Socialists against the American proposals.

For the real issue which faces both London and Paris in the next two years is not German rearmament but the amount of American assistance in the defence of Europe. The pressure from Washington for the use of German troops in a European army is chiefly motivated, not by any love of the Germans, but by the desire to reduce the commitment of American divisions in Europe. Without any German contingent, that commitment would be most uncomfortably high. With it, the American army in Europe could be kept down to a substantial token force. Any Englishman, remembering our own behaviour from 1918 to 1939, will at least understand this American reluctance to maintain a standing army in Europe. We must all guiltily admit that the specious arguments now being dished out in Washington about the Germans really being very decent fellows were employed for years by British negotiators in order to evade our obligations to France. But a guilty conscience does not excuse us for condoning the same self-deception when it is practised by another island 3,000 miles further across the Atlantic.

In two wars the New World has had to send an army to Europe in order to redress the balance of the Old. The danger of a third world war - we dismiss as unreal the theoretical alternative of Western capitulation without fighting - would be diminished by large-scale reinforcement of Western armies by American troops. To permit the Americans to evade this responsibility by rearming the Germans is to court disaster. Carlo Schmidt, the ablest of the German Social Democrats, made this point rather brutally last Saturday, when he remarked that the Germans would rather be bolshevised without a fight than rearmed for a war they could not possibly win. The condition, in fact, of German rearmament is the presence of a colossal American army to protect the Germans from the consequences of rearmament. Nothing could expose the folly of the British concession on principle so clearly as this reductio ad absurdum of the American proposal.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern bloc, discussions about the problem of German forces are also taking place. It is doubtful whether anyone in Moscow seriously believes in the possibility of a German Peace Treaty or indeed in the desirability of withdrawing the occupation troops for Germany. Though neither side dares to admit it, for fear of losing German support, the division of Germany is one of the few common interests which today unite East and West. The sensible course, therefore, for the Western Powers remains unaltered. In the first place, unlikely as any success may be, we should take the Prague proposals at their face values and give them a place on the Agenda of the Big Five meeting. Then, if failure is the only result, we should try to strike a bargain with the Russians on the subject of the type and size of armed police force to be permitted in the two Zones. Here our negotiating position would be strong, since we have 45 million Germans to arm whereas they have only 18 millions. It is certainly reasonable to make it clear that we should allow the Western Germans as strong a force as the Bereitschaften, already organised in the East. But we should make it clear that, if the Bereitschaften are demilitarised, we are prepared to enforce complete demilitarisation in Western Germany.

Such proposals would not be popular in Washington - involving, as they do, the maintenance of at least 10 American divisions in Europe. The French position in the 1920s was equally unpopular in London. But who can say that it was wrong, or deny that British isolationism was a major factor in Hitler's rise to power? Better some acrimony now than disaster later.

Lessons of Creswell

A Correspondent writes: The Creswell Inquiry stands adjourned until it is possible to open up the sealed portions of the pit. At this stage, it would be improper to anticipate the Inquiry's findings on the immediate causes of the disaster; but the evidence already heard emphasises how great are the new hazards associated with modern mining methods - particularly in connection with the growing toll of conveyor-belt fires. It is a tribute to the spirit of the Creswell miners that attendance and output have risen since the disaster, and everyone present at the Inquiry must have been impressed by the men's loyalty and devotion towards their Scottish manager, Mr. George Inverarity; but there were some lessons to be learnt which apply, not only to Creswell, but to all collieries, and particularly those highly mechanised.

First, from the standpoint of mining engineering, it looks as though the exponents of an alternative escape route via an intake airway at all pits where there is a long conveyor system were correct in their views. The 47 bodies so far recovered from Creswell were those of men who died from the poisonous fumes of carbon monoxide; not one of them was burnt. In other words, their only escape route lay along the return airway, which was bound to become choked with the smoke from the fire as it was sucked out by the powerful ventilating system. If there had been a second intake, it would seem likely that the majority of the men could have walked to the pit bottom with fresh air blowing into their lungs. Such an alternative route should surely become a statutory obligation - at any rate in all new collieries.

Secondly, there is an over-riding need to eliminate, as far as is humanly possible, the presence of all inflammable material underground. Is it quite impossible to invent a fire-resistant conveyor belt? Need there be timber supports or lagging? Can small oxygenised respirators not be supplied to men working "in-bye"? And finally, cannot the Coal Board or Ministry scientists invent a thermostatic device to be fitted at transfer points which will automatically cut off the power and release water sprays when and where overheating starts?

Meanwhile, pending such improvements, increased patrolling of long conveyors and - even more important - far better signalling systems are clearly required. There is obviously an urgent need for well trained fire-fighting teams on each shift, teams that, by improved methods of communication, can be assembled quickly at the site of a fire, and, above all, have at their disposal, not only plenty of light one-man fire extinguishers, but a generous supply of pressurised water, a supply that is properly maintained. For at Creswell there were, apparently, more drills, sprays etc. than at most pits; and yet the outbreak was able to spread with ghastly speed - a speed that took everyone by surprise, and so killed the very men who had the greatest faith and trust in the safety of their "model colliery".

America's Outside Left

Our Special Correspondent in New York writes: I have been watching, in the Eighteenth Congressional District, the last-ditch fight of what used to be the American Left. Thus engaged, I have felt like an eye-witness of the Battle of the Little Big Horn, where Sitting Bull made the last desperate throw of the Indians against a social pressure that was too strong for them. In this section, of the upper East Side - where the electorate is polarised between exclusive apartment houses and verminous, rat-infested slums which house Puerto Ricans, Negroes and submerged lumps of European immigrants - the Republicans and Democrats have made up their minds, this time, to have done with Vito Marcantonio, who is again running for election on an American Labor Party ticket. In 1948 he just scraped home; but today the A.L.P. is little more than an echo of the Communists; and though the coalition candidate, James G. Donovan, a conservative Democrat chosen because he was acceptable to the Republican machine, is a colourless product of Tammany Hall, there is also a candidate from the Liberal Party, which represents the anti-Communist Left. It is true that Marcantonio has a personal following unique in the U.S.; to the Puerto Ricans and the rest of the under-dogs in his constituency he has given unparalleled service in legal advice, help against evictions and so forth. These people are probably more concerned how to keep a roof over their heads than they are with the question whether Marcantonio has too consistently followed the Communist line. Donovan has done little real campaigning and has little to offer but the crudest anti-Communism. But he may not need to campaign: the total Republican and Democratic vote, if it is got out, is enough to swamp Marcantonio. Certainly no other candidate who has been such a faithful spokesman of the extreme Left would have even a fighting chance under present American conditions. As it is, having dwindled down from the mass legions of the New Deal days, through the Popular Front and Henry Wallace's "Gideon's Army", the Left - isolated, harried and unpopular - is fighting desperately to keep its one lone voice in Congress.

Press and Chancellor

De mortuis nil nisi bunkum, as Harold Laski used to say. The Tory press has been very sanctimonious about the Iron Chancellor, conveniently forgetting its vituperative attacks on austerity Cripps in 1947 and its assertion two years later that no man was fit to be Chancellor who devalued after promising to fight for the pound. Cripps was bitterly wounded when even Churchill took up this campaign; he felt that he could not continue in office unless he was vindicated at the polls. Hence the rumours about an autumn election last year and hence too the Prime Minister's otherwise inexplicable decision to risk an election in February, a compromise between Sir Stafford's desire to go to the country before the Budget and Herbert Morrison's tactically correct preference for the early summer.

PARLIAMENT: From Barnes to Bing.

No one would claim Mr. Barnes to be a prima donna. And indeed Public Utilities on Tuesday and Friday were dull enough. But on Wednesday (the Transport Commission's Report) the Whips saw apprehensively the shadow of the election through the lobbies, and whistled Arthur Greenwood and Kim McKay from sick bay to defeat defeat. Even before the Division, the day had its mild excitements. Captain Crookshank ruffled like a bantam hen at the Minister's description of himself and his friends as "politically dishonest" for their attack on the Transport Commission; and the Minister himself sat tighter in his seat when Major Poole from just behind him told him to clear out. Mr. Thorneycroft was his usual apoplectic self, bursting with fury at Mr. Barnes' failure to return the profitable sector of transport to private enterprise. The debate was wound up by Maxwell Fyfe and Jim Callaghan - seconded for this occasion from the Admiralty. Bludgeon against rapier. Callaghan got the best of the party exchanges, but left unanswered Poole's serious allegation that many holders of "C" licences were habitually cheating the Commission by acting as "under cover" carriers.

On Thursday, the Rev. J.G. McManaway made his first and last speech in a House in which he had sat mute for nine months, but of which he had never been a Member. Then up spoke Sir Maxwell to defend the advice he gave the ejected clergyman. With his eyes on the ends of the earth, he quoted ponderous precedents and exposed anomalies. But he missed the best. They were laid at his feet by Geoffrey Bing, unearthed like a terrier's bone. Few, save those present, could guess the extent of Bing's personal achievement. His speech was a Parliamentary occasion. But there was more to it than that. Almost alone he had to set in motion an inquiry which will "look into all the ridiculous disabilities with which Parliamentary practices are surrounded and to do away with many of them". In this drama, if McManaway held the title role, the show was Bing's.

TOM WILLIAMS

MR. TRUMAN'S NEXT CHANCE

An American President is elected for four years, and the world is lucky if, during one of those years, political conditions permit him to do himself justice. The first year is occupied by manoeuvres between President and Congress, to discover how far they can collaborate or how far they dare frustrate each other - which, by the system of checks and balances, they can do to an almost unlimited extent. During the second year the President must constantly consider his party's advantages in the mid-term November election. If his party loses heavily, the second half of his term of office may be entirely stultified by a hostile Congress. During the third year, if the President's party has a working majority in both Houses of Congress, fruitful work and responsible action become possible. In the fourth year, America's political life is dominated by the coming Presidential election; tactics and vote-catching defeat sense and sincerity.

America is now on the eve of the mid-term elections, and it is in the light of this coming event that Mr. Truman's recent actions must be judged. He showed much acumen by vetoing and denouncing as ludicrous the Congress anti-Communist Bill, thus rallying to his side all the progressive forces of the U.S. His veto over-ridden, the President is seeing to it that the absurd provisions of the Act are meticulously carried out; in so doing he both loyally fulfils his duty as President and makes his opponents look ridiculous. His recent visit to General MacArthur was probably of no military importance, but it reminded the electorate that President Truman has a genuine passion for soldiering, is a hero-worshipper of victorious generals and is not in any way at loggerheads with MacArthur in spite of their recent contretemps over American action in Formosa.

The President's speech in San Francisco on American foreign policy was as much directed to the American electorate as one delivered by Molotov or Vyshinsky in Moscow is intended exclusively for the Soviet public. His summary of the changes in Russian behaviour required for world peace was precisely that type of homily that a politician makes when he knows that he may be accused on the one side of war-mongering and, on the other, of appeasement. In brief, it was meant to show that the President is working for peace as well as for rearmament, while laying down conditions for a world settlement that cannot be immediately fulfilled. His first demand was that Russia should call upon the North Koreans to surrender. If Russian influence, impressed by the fighting strength of the United Nations, is used to hasten the end of hostilities in Korea, it will obviously not be exerted in public. Mr. Truman cannot seriously imagine that the Soviet Union could tell the world that it was unable or unwilling to aid one of its satellite States, even if that satellite, as there seems some reason to believe, went ahead of Soviet advice in starting hostilities. The question rather is whether the United Nations' diplomacy can be used to diminish the danger of Russia or China backing guerilla resistance in North Korea, and can persuade them, instead, to take part in a U.N. settlement for the whole country.

Mr. Truman's second point was that Russia must "live up to the principles of the U.N. Charter" - words which, in their context, have little meaning, since a co-operative attitude by Russia at Lake Success would be the result, rather than the cause, of better relations between the Powers. The same criticism applies even more forcibly to Mr. Truman's third demand, which is that Russia should raise the Iron Curtain and allow a free flow of ideas and information between East and West. Some sections of the American electorate may be impressed by a demand that the Soviet Union should suddenly liberalise her policy and discard her ideological defences; but there are few in the world outside America who will not notice the irony of this demand at a moment when Ellis Island is packed with ideological suspects, and when all visas to America have had to be suspended in view of a Congress decision that no-one remotely associated with anyone remotely associated with any Communist group can be admitted to the traditionally hospitable shores of the United States. The dollar curtain today is as impenetrable, if more woolly, than the Iron Curtain.

Mr. Truman's final condition is that Russia should co-operate in creating a system of collective security, including security from the atom bomb. Once again, this desirable object can only be intended to encourage American citizens to believe that the entire responsibility for the present deadlock belongs to the Soviet Union. Some, of course, will argue that from the outset the Soviet Union was always determined to wreck any agreement on atomic energy. Those who hold this view appear often to be the same persons who declare that, since the security of the West against the Red Army depends on retention of atomic superiority, it would be a gross act of weakness and "appeasement" to reach an atomic agreement, since any agreement would increase Russia's relative strength. It is contradictory to denounce Russia for both obstructing an atomic agreement and seeking wickedly to ban atomic weapons in order to undermine American power. The final breakdown of the Atomic Energy Commission was not, in fact, due mainly to obstruction by the U.S.S.R., which had (even if only in principle) offered to accept an international inspectorate, but rather to American reluctance to give up its "ace" weapon against Communist Russia.

This speech was not the appeal which the President would have made to the Soviet Union if he hoped at this moment to re-open those Great Power discussions whose absence Mr. Churchill has deplored, whose possible benefit Mr. Bevin has admitted and whose urgency Mr. Vyshinsky has stressed. It was an election-eve utterance. If the Democrats do well next month, we may possibly reach that calm period in the American political calendar which will enable Mr. Truman and General Marshall to make serious advance towards a world settlement. The moment should be singularly favourable if, as it seems at least possible, the U.S.S.R. has seen in Korea a warning of American strength and of Western anti-Communist unity. In that case there are many practical questions of peace-making to which Mr. Truman could turn his attention. Apart from the still pending Austrian Treaty and the whole dangerous problem of Germany, he might seek to prevent a recurrence of the Korean trouble by securing a more stable agreement in such other points of friction as Persia. He should certainly begin by recognising China and seeking to combine with all the Far Eastern Powers in making a Japanese Peace Treaty.

LONDON DIARY

A pugnacious M.P. friend tells me that he finds the new House of Commons nauseating. He does not deny that the object of maintaining the intimacy of a small hall with the need of rather greater space has been achieved; that the colour scheme and the subdued lighting is an artistic triumph; that the seats are more comfortable and the air-conditioning and acoustics a scientific wonder. In this atmosphere, reminiscent of a refined Odeon, you may expect a mechanical organ at any moment to rise from the floor beneath the Speaker's feet; in the delicate light a Chopin Nocturne would be suitable. The bull-like tenor of Aneurin Bevan will coo through the discreetly placed ear-phones; the acerbities of Kenneth Pickthorn will be transmuted into soothing whispers. I tried in vain to defend these charming amenities. "They are just what I complain of", declared my friend. "The House of Commons should be a battleground stripped for action. This place is only fit for a Coalition".

It is, I think, probable that Cripps may return to public life. He is only sixty-one; I gather that the doctors expect his full recovery if he now takes a long and complete rest. His political career has been an astonishing series of ins and outs and I bet on another "in". But if so, it will not be to the Treasury. No one could repeat his record there. He took over from Hugh Dalton when the Government seemed to be floundering like a ship without a helm, and he did a job comparable to that of Churchill in 1940. What was needed in that crisis was rigid moral courage and the power of concentrated decision. Cripps gathered round him a first-class team of junior Ministers with economic training and led them with all the skill and personal ascendancy which he used to show as a silk in the law-courts.

Hugh Gaitskell succeeds him at a thankless moment. The successes of austerity and devaluation belong to Sir Stafford's Chancellorship; the dangers of rearmament and inflation are the chief features of his own. Is he, as his critics believe, just a superbly capable civil servant? If so, he won't last long. But the critics may be in for a surprise. Though Gaitskell is modest and completely unaffected by political success, he is also extremely tough and shrewd. His record in the Labour Party is interesting. As an undergraduate he sided with the strikers in 1926, working on the Oxford Committee under G.D.H. Cole, and he got his first dose of international politics in Vienna during the Dollfuss putsch. In the 1930's, along with his closest friend Evan Durbin, he was a Dalton man, supporting rearmament and arguing at W.E.A. day-schools the unpopular case against the Popular Front and the Left Book Club. If he is a Right-winger, as he is, it is from genuine conviction and not from any inclination for an easy way out. I should describe him as an Oliver Franks with political ambitions.

* * *

As Boyd Orr remarked, science has given us the powers of the ancient gods without their wisdom. But caution can sometimes deputise for wisdom and it was comforting to be told by the experts on the Biological Hazards of Atomic Energy that in peace-time elaborate safeguards can render the handling of atomic power and its byproducts relatively safe. For instance, as a result of the medical precautions which were taken before work began on the British pile, there have been no human casualties and the effluent from Harwell into the Thames contains less radioactivity than the natural water-supplies of New York. That, of course, is under all the cautious controls of peace-time; atomic energy gone berserk in the explosion of a bomb is another matter. And about this no one who listened to the geneticists, concerned with the hereditary effects of atomic radiation, could feel any reassurance. Scientists know enough about its lethal and detrimental effects on the body cells and on the genes which pass on these effects to successive generations to fear what they do not know. As Professor Mather said; "Murder a gene and murder will out not in this generation, maybe in the next, but certainly in later generations". The new Institute of Biology, the Atomic Scientists Association and the British Association which brought the 500 doctors and scientists together at the Royal Institution last week-end, are to be commended for tackling a subject about which there has been a dangerous conspiracy of silence.

* * *

I was grieved to hear of the death of Barbara Ayrton Gould. It has always been on my conscience that if I had worked a bit harder and stayed a bit longer I might have got Mrs. Ayrton Gould into Parliament at the 1929 by-election at Northwich. In those days I had a small car which could take to the poll one in the front and one or two in the dickey. A couple more journeys might have given her the five more votes that she needed to be elected. When she did reach Parliament she turned out to be one of the best women M.P.s Westminster has known. She will be missed today; she was one of the survivors of that energetic and idealistic generation who fought for women's suffrage, worked with George Lansbury in the early days of the "Daily Herald", and spent many of her best years championing causes which had little to do with the economics of Socialism but a great deal to do with social justice.

* * *

How many of the eminent personages who write to "The Times" about road accidents know of the work of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research at Harmondsworth? Mr. Glanville, the Director of Road Research, writes to inform me that I was right about the value of "courtesy cops"; during the year before the last war operational research showed that they reduced the accident rate by about 10% in non-built-up areas. This would mean something like a 3½% reduction of all road accidents. More significant, perhaps, in some areas like Lancashire, where the experiment was probably the most thoroughly tried, the reduction was as much as 37%, which would amount to 13% of all accidents.

* * *

It seems hard that Mr. Attlee, who gave his name to the Attlee Brigade in Spain, should be debarred from visiting the U.S. I am assuming, of course, that America persists in rigorously carrying out the MacCarran Act which excludes anyone who has been in any way or at any time "linked" with any association with totalitarian affiliations. This excludes almost every decent member of any Socialist party anywhere in Western Europe, since all of us were more or less engaged in some Popular Front activity on behalf of Republican Spain. Thousands of Liberals would be similarly debarred, and so, of course, would a rare Conservative, like the Duchess of Atholl. Nominally, the Act also excludes supporters of the Nazis or Fascists. That means that anyone who belonged to any pro-Franco Association will also get stuck in Ellis Island. Whether Mr. Churchill can now enter America I am not sure; he was certainly linked with the League of Nations Union when it was fairly riddled with Communists. Whether Mr. Bevin will be let in for the next Foreign Ministers' Conference in America, I can't say. Possibly they will overlook his early subversive record as the Dockers' K.C., his part in the Leeds Conference during the first world war which sought to set up Workers' Councils, and his often boasted sabotage of Churchill's intervention in Russia (the "Jolly George" incident); and they may decide to forgive any occasion on which during the Spanish war he may have appealed for milk to send to Communist children.

CRITIC

VISHY AND MOLLY

The celebrated Soviet double act,
The Molly-Vishy team of vaudevillians,
Invents new entertainment to attract
In East and West, an audience of millions.
The Vishy patter gives U.N.a thrill
While Molly in the Balkans tops the bill.

At Lake Success, while Vishy does his stuff,
And gives his novel conjuring turn a try-out,
Molly in Europe stages noises off
To scare peace-doves as from the hat they fly out -
Then Vishy shams amazement at the volley
Let off with a resounding bang by Molly.

While Molly pulls old tricks out of the bag
And warns his team-mate the backchat to lay off,
Vishy is busy building up the gag
Timing the cue for Molly's comic pay-off....
The simple-minded fans do not discern
The demonstration is a double turn.

The two comedians to increase the fun
And make sensational effects more certain,
Though each appears to stage his act alone,
Rehearsed it all behind the iron curtain.
Now Vishy works the Transatlantic Halls
While Molly's taking iron curtain calls.

SAGITTARIUS

REPORT ON ITALY

II. THE CLOCK RUNS DOWN

"Marshall Aid has done two things for Italy", said the Breda delegate to me, after a meeting of the consigli di gestione (works councils) in Milan: "it has filled our shops with luxuries and our streets with unemployed." This summary judgment needs qualification. Certainly anti-Cominform dollars have gone to raising the standard of upper-class consumption. ("Thank God for Togliatti", observed an expensive young woman as she guided me round the chromiumed delights of her paunchy protector's Chrysocraft in Portofino). Certainly most of the (few enough) capital goods which Italy has imported with E.R.P. funds could have been produced at home. But in truth the real impact of Marshall Aid on the Italian economy has been insignificant. The lire "counter-part" proceeds from the sale of the imports which the well-to-do have so blithely consumed have gone, not to revitalising Italy's dying industries, * but to building up a sterile Treasury hoard of gold and foreign exchange.

The situation against which the industrial workers of Italy are in revolt this autumn would be incredible if it did not exist. In a country whose only solution - as the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe has repeatedly stressed - lies in augmented production, the mechanisation of agriculture and the industrialisation of the South with the North's active aid, the industrial potential of the northern cities is being stifled, of set purpose. Light industries producing such things as sewing-machines and Olivetti typewriters are doing fairly well, though even in relatively prosperous Turin there are 60,000 unemployed. Fiat, now entrenched in a virtual monopoly over automobile production, boasts proudly that it has doubled its output of private cars over the past year; and other monopolies such as Pirelli, Montecatini and the electrical suppliers are earning the grateful thanks of their tiny ring of big shareholders. But, by and large, the clock is running down. Mechanical engineering is working at 50 per cent of capacity - in Liguria at hardly 30 per cent. Textiles are at barely 60 per cent; Snia Viscosa is doing only 24-30 hours a week. In the non-ferrous metal industries there is an unused capacity of 50 per cent; the shipyards, which could turn out 300,000 tons a year to re-build Italy's depleted merchant fleet, are building only 80,000 tons a year. The output of lorries, which could be 15,000 a year, is 5,000; that of farm tractors, which could be 12,000, is less than half that figure. In the Fossati tractor works near Genoa, which I visited, and where 300 decent men had just got dismissal notices, the past year's output had been 120 units, against a potential of 600. Yet agriculture is starved for lack of mechanical power.

Seek the causes of this economic paralysis, and you find two main operative factors. First, the general policy of "saving the lira" by stringent deflation of credit - a policy launched in the autumn of 1947 by President Einaudi when he was Minister of Finance and given this year a fresh turn of the screw - has now created in industry a catastrophically descending spiral. Not merely is production to-day feeling the full effects of the drastic cuts in raw material imports imposed in 1948-49; the cost of banking credit, at 10-12 per cent. is almost prohibitive, and the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (I.R.I.) appears to be acting under a Treasury directive to starve, rather than support, the enterprises in which the State is shareholder. As a result, the consumption goods industries, such as textiles, have been reduced to stagnation through the insufficiency of domestic demand; the monthly figures of bankruptcies and protested bills have been steadily rising; production - save in a few light industries - is lower than it was three years ago; and the level of unemployment is reaching fresh records above the two million mark.

The second factor can be shortly and sufficiently described as la trahison du patronat. The same industrialists who feathered their nests in the 1944-47 inflation by hoarding commodities, and speculating in foreign currencies with loans obtained from the banks, found no difficulties in adjusting their "line" to a situation in which "their" Government, with Papal blessing, ordained retrenchment of output as a deliberate policy. Why invest money in the costly reconversion of heavy industry from war to peace production when quick profits could be reaped from the manufacture of scarce luxuries? Why oppose, for example, the suffocation of Breda by Fiat when monopolism offered, for a fortunate few, the last chance of exacting tribute from a decaying economy. Why listen to arguments that the South must be industrialised or that a vigorous policy of State investment must be pursued, when anything in the nature of a real economic "plan" would probably involve inroads into the 430 milliards of profit which under-employed industry yielded for the rentiers last year? How much simpler to let factories close, leave the workless to rot, and hope that the situation will be saved by the Americans ultimately taking over the unprofitable plants - Breda, Ansaldo, Caproni and the rest - for the manufacture of arms for Western Defence.

Men do not readily work for nothing. Yet this autumn, in the Siemens plant at Ilva di Bolzaneto, in the Breda works and elsewhere, hundreds of workers have been struggling to keep production going by their own unaided efforts. Following the example set in 1948, when the metallurgical workers of Sesto San Giovanni clubbed up their pittances to buy raw materials when the management walked out, these Reds of Milan and Genoa, Spezia and Savona, are out to prove, and are proving, that it is the industrialists, not they, who are the saboteurs. They see clearly that a "shot" of armament contracts would merely distort further an economy in which war-inflated munitions plants are already a grave problem. They realise that, with population increasing by 400,000 a year, the structural problem of Italian unemployment and spiralling poverty can be solved only by an extension of intensified production.

It is idle for the American E.C.A. officials to complain that the Italian industrialists and the supine, inefficient financial directors of the State-financed enterprises (who openly proclaim their identification with private interests) are doing nothing to save Italy's economy from creeping paralysis. When they protest innocently that Marshall Aid has been wasted, and that the clock is running down despite their good intentions, the Italian trade unionist just laughs; he is only too bitterly aware that America has forced on the Italian people rule by men who have neither the courage nor the will to wind up the clock before the pendulum stops.

Genoa, September. AYLMER VALLANCE

(to be concluded)

* Since this was written, the E.C. Administrator for Italy has been constrained to protest that less than one-fifth of the available counter-part funds has been used since 1948, in productive investment.

THIS ENGLAND

All the children in the picture were born after Mrs. - and her husband parted in 1930. Altogether she has had eighteen children - fourteen of them she says, by various fathers. Mrs. - ... says: "It has been a hard job bringing them up. But I am proud of my family. I neither smoke nor go to the cinema. My only relaxation is the radio." - Sunday Pictorial. (Col. H.M. Dakeyne).

Mrs. - of Southfields Drive, Leicester, has won £68,420 for 6d. in a treble chance pool. This is a record dividend for this pool. Mrs. - uses a system which is entirely her own, and includes picking matches with numbers corresponding to the dates of her family's birthdays. - Oxford Mail. (H.H. Hellin).

... Some of the new office blocks now going up in London were also worthy of a great city and encouraged him to believe that we were at the beginning of a great spiritual revival. .. - Speech of Lord Strabolgi, reported in The Times. (Peter D. Smithson).

Explaining why Suffolk Women's Institutes will bar Civil Defence lectures at their meetings Mrs. H. -, West Suffolk chairman, said: "We wish to keep our meetings pleasant, but our members will help Civil Defence as individuals." - News Chronicle. (Mrs. T.J. Mahon).

WHITEHAVEN REVISITED

The harbour of Whitehaven is deserted at this moment, except for one or two tiny fishing boats lying drunkenly on the mud. Behind and to the right lies the town, with its rows of terraced houses, and its narrow cobbled alleys. I used to come here a good deal before the war, and physically the place hardly seems to have changed; the only and obvious change is the absence, at the street corners, of the little groups of unemployed miners and steel workers. But behind the changeless façade there is a very real revolution in spirit, a revolution of which those street-corners are a symbol. It is not simply that West Cumberland was once a "Special Area" which later became a "Development Area"; it is not merely that in the last fifteen years the unemployment figure in Whitehaven has dropped from 58 per cent. to 1 per cent. It is simply this: West Cumberland, in its period of depression uniquely grim, is now, in its prosperity, uniquely inspiring.

In West Cumberland's history, geography and geology have played their part. The one gave it a most unfortunate isolation: bounded on one side by the Lakeland mountains and on another by the Irish Sea, this strip of land, containing half a dozen towns and some 150,000 people, is approachable by rail and road only by a fantastic detour. The other, geology, gave it iron - ore and coal, the two resources which are the cause of its triumph and its misery. For 70 per cent. of its population used to live directly from iron and coal; there were no other industries worthy of the name, and when those industries failed the whole area decayed. Between 1923 and 1935 the number of people employed in the iron-ore mines dropped from 4,000 to 1,500; in coal-mining from 11,000 to 4,500; and in steel-smelting from 4,000 to 2,000. The number of unemployed rose in the same period from 22 per cent. to 45 per cent. Over 25,000 men and women left the area; the population of Workington, for instance, dropped by 7,000 in ten years. And in 1937 the Medical Officer of Health for Cumberland stated that, out of a hundred and eleven boys who were examined in Whitehaven, only seven were in "excellent" health. Forty-three were undernourished, and thirty-six were seriously undernourished. It is very easy indeed, in 1950, to find men who were on the dole for seven or eight years continually, perhaps bartering the vegetables grown on their allotments for fish caught down on the shore.

It is fashionable these days to forget such figures. Yet, in 1950, when everybody is so morbid and hang-dog, when even the Welfare State seems to have lost its ethical fervour, it is a joy to come to a place like this and believe, once more, that man can solve his own problems pretty well, given the opportunity and the leadership. The attempts of the Government, from 1934 onwards, to tackle the problem by the Special Areas Act failed in West Cumberland as badly as they failed elsewhere. Maryport harbour was dredged, nine adolescent welfare clubs were opened, and sixteen women's groups received grants from the Special Area fund. But the depression continued; more and more young people left the district, and the health of the school-children was not improved. The change came - and this is where the story begins to be splendid - as soon as the people of West Cumberland began to work out their own salvation. On 27 September, 1935, the Cumberland Development Council was proclaimed at a public meeting in the Opera House at Workington. The plan was to create a Council maintained by voluntary contributions, but sponsored by local industrialists, business men, trade unionists, and local authorities. Under the existing provisions of the Special Areas Act it had every reason to expect support from Whitehall; and, to be fair, this support was generously given. But the fact remains that the recovery of West Cumberland dates from the formation of the Council, and the appointment, as its full-time secretary, of Jack Adams, a man whose father had been killed in the mines, and who had himself started work at the age of twelve. Upon the Council, and especially upon Jack Adams, fell the apparently impossible task of finding employment for 75 per cent. of the adult population.

Basically it was a matter of breaking down the area's reliance upon coal and iron by attracting new industries into West Cumberland - despite the bad road and rail facilities, the distance from large ports, the remoteness of London. There were, however, certain assets in the district, and the Council made much of these in its efforts to "sell" West Cumberland to industrialists: there was plenty of clay for building-bricks, excellent granite for making roads, endless water resources, large cement deposits, and layers of limestone and gypsum. And, of course, there were the old coal ports, and the availability of coal and iron. But the area's greatest asset in the late 'thirties was that in the event of war it was relatively "safe". Its inaccessibility had at last become its greatest selling-point, and as early as 1935 a confidential report had passed from Cumberland to Whitehall: "The position of West Cumberland would appear to be ideal for the site of a Government arsenal of any description....." Anyway, loans to the Council were forthcoming from the Treasury, and the first of them (significantly spent on a publicity booklet called Wonderful West Cumberland) was rapidly repaid. Jack Adams went on an extensive tour of Europe, persuading manufacturers to develop new plant in his corner of Britain. And they came. By the outbreak of war, sixteen new industries had come to West Cumberland.

War inevitably speeded up this recovery; ordnance factories were built, factories for the manufacture of aircraft parts, parachutes, and shell cases. But the plan of attracting industries which did not depend on war or an armaments drive still continued, and eventually West Cumberland became a successful "Development Area". In ten years, between 1937 and 1947, work was found for 16,000 men and women - work in button factories, on surgical instruments, on clothing, on silk, on fertilisers, on mining machinery, on milk processing, on toilet preparations, on atomic energy, (The remoteness of West Cumberland has an ominous ring nowadays). Twelve years ago fewer than 300 women had jobs in Whitehaven; iron and coal and steel are not the best industries for the employment of female labour. Today there are nearly 3,000 women at work here. Even in the old industries the story is encouraging. At a pit where two shafts were working fifteen years ago only one is working now; but a new seam is being developed, and soon the manpower figures in this colliery will rise again. Jack Adams, still at his job (though nowadays he is also an official of the Board of Trade) is now Baron Adams of Ennerdale, but still "Jack" to the thousands of men and women who know what he's done for them.

This story is worthwhile; above all, because it is an example of a rare spirit nowadays - the spirit of comradeship that unites men and women who are striving to build something worth having. It has been one of the old phenomena of post-war Britain that our social revolution has not on the whole been glorious in this way. Working people, who struggled together in the days of the depression and again during the blitz, know only too well that, despite full employment, the old spirit has gone. It is, no doubt, a commonplace of social history - this sense of a spiritual vacuum which follows a victory. For myself, I have noticed it everywhere, except here.

Whitehaven. GEORGE LEATHER

IN AN AUSTRIAN TEA-CUP

An old story seems today worth re-telling. In November, 1918, an Austrian wag distributed hand-bills which read: "Tomorrow at eleven o'clock there will be a revolution. In case of rain the revolution will take place indoors". The attempted "Red putsch" of October, 1950, definitely took place indoors. To be exact, it took place in the newspaper offices of London and New York as well as Vienna. The Austrian press, certainly set the example. The papers supporting the coalition were full of stories about "KP Terror", to which the Communist dailies replied with accounts of "Polizeiterror". The incidents described would be routine in any big strike, and were certainly exceeded in violence in Britain in 1926 or in Detroit in 1937. The strikers threw picket lines round factories or railway yards and forcibly prevented non-strikers from going to work; in a few places, they carried on stay-in strikes. The police protected strike-breakers and sometimes occupied the factories or guarded the trams. In some parts of Vienna piles of sand or stones were heaped on the tram-lines; these were the famous "barricades", which were never meant to interrupt motor or foot traffic and which nobody tried either to guard or to remove. Elsewhere the trams ran normally, and the demonstration on the Rathausplatz called by the strike committee - which was mainly but not entirely Communist - was the mildest of affairs.

Much has been made of the fact that the strike was strongest in the Russian areas. As to Vienna, this is true and indeed natural, since the Russians occupy the traditional factory suburbs and militant strongholds (remember 1934) of Floridsdorf, Stadlau, and Favoriten. As to Austria as a whole, it is not true; and this is a striking fact. The Russian conduct in the USIA-Betrieben (the German assets which they now own) was odd and obviously not co-ordinated. Some managers urged the workers to strike. Others insisted that full production must be maintained in the interests of the Soviet Union; the workers could demonstrate their solidarity, presumably in their spare time. It was in the Western zones, where the Russian complication was absent, that the strike was strongest; it was almost solid at the Steyr automobile works and the nationalised steel plant at Linz.

Now that it is all over, everyone is claiming to have "saved" Austria. The ordinary Austrian is getting rather tired of being saved; and in this case it is not obvious that he has been saved from anything except from the previous level of prices. The wages and prices agreement, which actually provoked the strikes, was reluctantly accepted by trade unions under pressure from the People's Party. It has its roots in the change in the rate for the Schilling against the dollar and the decision to pay the farmer a grain price nearer to the world price. It can be defended as a safeguard against the ending of Marshall Aid, but its immediate significance is that it saves the E.C.A. 700 million Schilling, the sum used to make up the difference between the two grain prices. Critics of the agreement say that prices could be held down by cutting some stages in the vastly complicated distribution network, and by introducing a "utility" scheme to replace the antiquated and costly craft methods of producing consumer goods. In any case, a subsidy could be found by tightening up the collection of income and corporation taxes, or by using the Budget surplus, which happens to be just 700 million Schilling. This surplus has been taken for an "extraordinary" capital investment, but nobody knows how much has really been invested.

However this may be, the agreement is acutely unpopular among both workers and all but the biggest employers. The workers have been told that the increases in wages and various allowances will compensate for the price increases. This is not true, even on paper, save for certain favoured categories. Further, it takes no account of the creeping increase in prices which has gone on all summer, or of the further increases which are certainly on their way. That is where the employers come in. All of them will have to raise the prices of their products, not so much because wages have gone up as because coal and electricity are up by half, and freight rates and other overheads must follow. But a generally overlooked feature of the agreement is this: the trade unions did not, as they had done in the three previous agreements, pledge themselves to present no new wage demands. In fact, as trade union spokesmen don't mind saying, they will have to present demands. Already, the bakers have won a 10% rise above the official 10%. And this is likely to mean more strikes. What will happen, as the "Red Plot" record wears hoarse, the living standard drops, and the trade union leaders find it harder to oppose strikes, is anyone's guess.

Austria, now fairly heavily industrialised, has more chance of getting on the right economic road than ever between 1918 and 1938. What she cannot stand is the present combination of peasant economics and passive dependence on American aid. Constant price increases can only mean a choice between an inflationary spiral and the closing of factories. A Government economist warned in "Die Presse" the other day that present trends presage an unemployment level of 250,000 for this winter. From this, Austria really needs to be saved.

Vienna, October. MERVYN JONES

SO THEY SAY . . .

In the "close season" imposed by the printing trade dispute, this commentator has had the opportunity of studying at greater leisure than usual an intriguing outbreak of coincidence in the national press. First the "News Chronicle", complaining of "rumour, hearsay, or wishful thinking" about Russia, solved "The Mystery of the Kremlin" by running questions and answers put to General Bedell Smith, U.S. Ambassador in 1946-49. Then the "Daily Mail" published "the authentic story" (not unfriendly) by the assistant editor of "British Ally", then on his way home. Among other things, he noted that "anything like a British pub" is completely lacking in Moscow, and that "as soon as the Russian people know you are a foreigner they will shy away from you." The "Daily Express", however, intercepting the "British Ally" party in Stockholm, found that, among other things, "it is easy" for foreigners to get Russians talking; all you have to do is to go into a "Moscow tavern".

The "Express" ace-correspondent, Sefton Delmer, distrusting apparently the narrow view of the "British Ally" staff, proceeded to contribute a "true picture" - based on reports of repatriated prisoners and Soviet refugees. "The Daily Worker" retorted with the reactions of visiting British charwomen (LAMBETH ROSE AT MOSCOW BALLET). Undaunted, the Beaverbrook team hit back with the experiences of a French Catholic priest. Next the "Daily Graphic" ran "Inside the Kremlin: the True Story at Last." This consisted of extracts from the book by Sir Maurice Petersen, British Ambassador in 1946-9. Finally "Illustrated", stating that "you and the Russians, between you, are going to find a way to peace - or you're likely to fight," ran the most informative story of all, entitled "If You Were Born in Russia."

Incidentally, is Another World Watching all this, do you think? Before answering, read the "Sunday Express" and "Sunday Dispatch", which have been competing with preposterously solemn "investigations" of Flying Saucers. For once dog did take a bite at dog; other papers gleefully splashed the Astronomer Royal's caustic comments. The "Sunday Chronicle" gravely printed a large picture of a "Flying Saucer," together with its "special investigator's" gripping story. He explained that he got his picture with a lid on a piece of string!

AUTOLYCUS

BOOK REVIEWS

A PAMPHLETEER

"Shooting an Elephant". By George Orwell. Secker & Warburg. 10s.

This is a posthumous collection from Orwell's casual writings. It contains three excellent pieces of disheartened reporting; the well-known account of shooting an elephant in a Burmese village, a report of a hanging in the same country and the description of his appalling experience in the public ward of a Parisian hospital. An alert, illusionless, soldierly tolerance is in all Orwell's reporting; it is as if he had woken up an hour before sunrise and was on the point of going into a hopeless action. These sketches are followed by a number of pieces of literary enquiry; an essay on Gandhi and a collection of lighter articles which Orwell wrote week by week in "Tribune".

As a critic - and as an imaginative writer too - Orwell had something of the plain, practical craftsman who arrived in the middle of literature with a bag of tools to see what was the matter with it. He knew and admired the best pieces but he regarded them mistrustfully, knowing what his fellow tradesmen were like if one did not watch them - the things a Shakespeare, a Tolstoy, a Swift would try to palm off! - and inclining to make a Star Chamber matter of it. He would begin on their political morality, from this he would deduce their metaphysical intention and would come round eventually to their undeniable quality as artists, with a kind of consternation as if he had been caught by a reluctant, too charming memory. It was never easy for Orwell to reconcile himself - it never is for the politically-minded - to the point of fundamental difference between life and literature. An aura of privilege hung about the arts and it distracted one from the mixed and bitter soils from which they had been fed. In this collection of essays, for example, one suspects that he was secretly attracted when he first picked up Tolstoy's bad-tempered and insensitive attack on Shakespeare and King Lear, simply because Shakespeare was an institution; and that the zest with which Orwell exposed Tolstoy's errors when he found them, owes something to the fact that Tolstoy was a privileged institution himself. It was not a matter which a democrat and rebel with a conscience could pass.

Orwell was not a crank or a theorist on such a subject. He put his finger at once on Tolstoy's insensibility to poetry and imaginative language; and shrewdly saw the parallel of Lear's case with Tolstoy's own. He noted that Lear, Tolstoy, Swift, exploded in the end because they were unable to stand the tensions of their lives, but it troubled Orwell's conscience that he admired the works of men whom he disagreed with, not only in politics but in ultimate belief, and that the reasons for this admiration can be discovered only in purely literary criticism, and this seemed to him out of place in our time. He hated the otherworldliness of Tolstoy and the non-attachment of Swift, but both assumed that life was not worth living; on the other hand, as a stoic, Orwell held that there was more suffering than pleasure in life, and he admitted the bleakness of his prospect. He was sufficiently a wilful exile in modern society, a lonely conscience, to have a leaning towards the renunciation he instinctively suspected; on the other hand, he was also impelled by a determination to seek out all shams and expose them. No one sheltered less under the illusions by which the rest of us live; his honesty was not, as it is in some writers, the expression of hatred; it was a sincere passion, but it was also a vanity.

The great enemies were those beliefs which were "against life on earth", which implied that there was need of the privilege of illusion. For Orwell the wish for death is at the bottom of Tolstoy's otherworldliness after his conversion, and it is complicated by an egotism which demanded that he should be made happier by renouncing the world. He asked too much. This seems to me a true judgment. In Swift, the impersonal detachment which he asked us to admire in the Houyhnhnms, is the same wish to die. If we enjoy the work of a man so wrongheaded, Orwell thought, it is because of the style - which is a question of timing, spacing and emphasis - and because we recognise the role of disgust and misanthropy in life. Yet, surely, what we really enjoy in Swift is the invention, we share the universal delight in fantasy set out with exactitude and apparent good sense as if it were real, and in bowling along from one absurd but precise dream world to another.

Tyranny, indifference to intellectual liberty or the attempt to smother it by euphemism, or the formulae of committees, the vested interest in power, the moralities of suffer-it-to-be-so-now and of the greater good and the lesser evil, were Orwell's targets. Among the political writers of the 30's, he was the only pure rebel and recalcitrant, for he was not blind to the conservative and totalitarian temptations of the Left. A political critic, he was in the dilemma of believing that all politics are dishonest; and as he was an anarchist and not a socialist (believing that doctrine led straight to tyranny) one had the impression of being shot in the back the whole time for one's good and without the good nature of a guerilla like Shaw. Orwell was often wildly unjust; there is a reckless passage about the defeatism of the English intellectuals during the war. I suppose it springs from Orwell's frequent pose of not being an intellectual, of not having even that privilege, and of being the handicraftsman. Or, in his automatic desire to expose shams, Orwell may simply have jumped at the obvious truth that intellectual men are more aware of their situation than others; but wilfully overlooked the other half of the truth that this habit of mind acts as a shock-absorber, and has nothing to do with irresolution.

Orwell's criticism is at its best in the careful, documentary analysis of James Burnham's writings - a brilliant and provocative piece of work - and in the essay which describes the growth of bad English among the educated, as a political conspiracy. Vagueness, shoddiness and - a clever phrase from the boy's world in which Orwell engagingly lived - "Meccano English" are chiefly found in political or administrative writers. This language is a kind of official Chinese, incomprehensible to the reader and meant to be, so that he may not know what the ruling class is doing; when this is not the intention it is the effect and in either case it is the expression of decadence in social life, an inability to face unpalatable facts. (Walter Bagehot more shrewdly pointed out that businessmen and administrators have to live in a blurred world). This tongue is a commonplace in the totalitarian countries, its manifestoes are a byword outside and (possibly) inside them; and Orwell himself, in his essay on "double-think" in 1984 showed how the new language can be successfully exposed to a large part of the world, by hard ridicule and satire. In the present war of propaganda, the invention of the phrase "double-think" was a devastating dead hit; just as "Animal Farm" was one of those single acts of ridicule and fantasy that destroy a myth in the general mind at one blow.

Orwell was a natural pamphleteer. His attack on the prevention of literature in the totalitarian state, in this book, is devastating. But like Swift, he does not wish his pessimism to be cheated; and his hatred of literary prostitution in Russia, which is sufficiently justified, takes his mind off the economic disaster that has overtaken literature in the free countries. In England, the arts are being just as systematically destroyed, without direction or censorship, by taxation. The true weakness of the writers since the Thirties is that their angers have been exogamous. Evil has been so seductive and romantic in Spain, Germany and Russia, that we do not notice how it works at home.

V.S. PRITCHETT

"GOD, YOU ARE VAST"

"A Year of Grace". Passages chosen and arranged to express a mood about God and man. By Victor Gollancz. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

This volume, the author tells us, is the aftermath of an emotional storm. "There was even one whole year, following the year of grace to which the title refers, when I lived second by second in the hell of terror and despair". The result of this experience was not a new conviction, or a revelation, but the recovery of a mood - "the mood that has dominantly been mine ever since, as a very small boy, I sniffed the air and sang for joy amid the late autumn leaves in a narrow London garden." In that Traherneam ecstasy he felt, and now feels again, that love, with pity and mercy as its chief attributes, is the only reality. Mr. Gollancz assumes that this mood is an unfashionable one, because "anti-religious humanism and anti-humanistic religion are both very prevalent to-days a mood about God and man presumably implies either a religion of humanism or a humanistic religion. But "mood", not "doctrine".

It is not for the present reviewer to quarrel with such an attitude, for he has no doctrine of his own to recommend. His purpose is, in the friendliest spirit (for the book has touched him), to try and define for the benefit of other possible readers the kind of mood which Victor Gollancz succeeds in expressing. There are 550 pages, which is room enough. Let us first note who has been crowded out. Granted that we have read the introductory definition of the book's purpose, we would not expect to meet the Stoics, or the dry intellects of the Enlightenment; we would not hope to catch a glimpse of Voltaire or of Pope. But in a book on God and man we might expect, to name only a dozen of thirty names that have occurred to me: Homer, Lucretius, Virgil, Descartes, Pascal, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, Kant, Nietzsche and Freud. The significance of these omissions is made more evident when we note the most favoured authors - to name a dozen again: Berdyaev, Blake, Sir Thomas Browne, Martin Buber, Meister Eckhardt, William Law, Shelley, Walter de la Mare, Rilke, Spinoza, Tagore and Traherne. There are also many quotations from the Bible and the Hasidic legends.

Mr. Gollancz admits that his mood is contradictory, and one cannot help wondering how Spinoza was induced to consort with Tagore, or Hopkins (eight items) with de la Mare. It seems odd to include so much Meredith (nine items) and no Hardy; so much Marcus Aurelius (eight items) and no Epictetus; so much Angelus Silesius (twenty-three items) and no Novalis. The omission of Shakespeare and Pascal in such an anthology is incomprehensible. There is a lack of humour - no Rabelais, Chaucer, Cervantes - an aspect of man and even, as Chesterton might have said, of God. But it would be wrong to suggest that there is any carelessness in these inconsistencies; with the exception of Spinoza, the unexpected inclusions minister to Mr. Gollancz's idyllic heart-whisperings; and the unexpected exclusions are not consistent with a vague and vasty mysticism - "God, you are vast" cries Rilke in one item, and "all's vast that vastness means" affirms Francis Thompson in another. It is intimidating; but let me bring out my nagging doubt. There is a new gnosticism about which I do not like because it lacks the precision of both art and reason. Aldous Huxley is its most fashionable propagator, and this anthology, though more lyrical in mood than the Californian snalects is nevertheless on the misty side of the mountains. Here dwell all those people who, disillusioned with politics and revolution (it was their mistake ever to put their trust in them) now fall back on a belief in "a Christian renewal of souls" (Berdyaev) or in an "optimistic-ethical theory of the universe working in partnership with ethics to produce civilisation" (Albert Schweitzer - another author much quoted by Mr. Gollancz). But Mr. Gollancz can also quote Blake:

> He who would do good to another, must do it in minute particulars. General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer.

and Spinoza:

> The more perfection anything has, the more active and the less passive it is: and contrariwise, the more active it is, the more perfect it becomes.

These aphorisms would seem to deflate many of their airy neighbours. It is not merely that faith without works is dead: words without concreteness are dangerous, and the hope of the world lies not in the expansion of the spirit without bounds, but in the creation of vessels of precision to contain our little share of that commodity.

HERBERT READ

DESERT AND MOSQUE

'Journey to Siwa'. By Robin Maugham. Chapman and Hall. 21s.
'No Woman's Country'. By Michael Langley. Jarrolds 15s.
'Invitation to Morocco'. By Rom Landau. Faber 18s.

"Very few Englishmen can write as well as Mr. Robin Maugham ...", "Good writing, fine description and much wisdom ...", "... a heroic young man a nimble pen and romantic impulses". The mounting credits are pinned up on the back flap of the dust-jacket like gymkhana rosettes on the stable door. Shall we soon be talking of 'the new Maugham' in a sense different from what we have hitherto meant by that familiar phrase? No; not unless we are soon offered something less frail than Journey to Siwa. It adds little to the already considerable literature on this famous Libyan oasis; it adds nothing to the nascent reputation of Mr. Maugham. There are only 120 pages, of which half are photographs by a Greek called Taki Papadimou; there is no map; and the book costs a guinea. It is too much for so little.

Mr. Maugham set out across the desert from Cairo with intentions so modest that, had he been almost any other writer, criticism might well have been disarmed: "Taki should be able to get some lovely photographs, and I will try to write the text to go with them". He has done that. As a caption writer he is a success. But in order to space out the photographs (one can see no other reason), the few thousand words of description have been padded with silly jokes about Alexander and Zeus Ammon, and eight pages about the explorer W.G. Browne, much of it digested from the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' and the D.N.B., and the bulk of it totally irrelevant to Siwa. Almost everything was present which promised well for this book. Here is one of the two modern writers (Ralph Bagnold is the other) who knows and loves the Libyan desert, who in 'Come to Dust' has already written an admirable book about its moods, who is young, adventurous, carefree and romantic: and here are these strange Mappin-terraces of Siwa, less a City than a sudden tightening of the desert sand, with a population that seem to respond no less warmly to the alien visitor than, say, Cornishmen to Englishmen, and are therefore, with trouble, knowable. And what do we get? We get a picture book. Robin Maugham has it in him to do for the desert what Saint-Exupery did for the air. He is a serious writer. Why then does he find it necessary to produce little pieces of illustrated journalism, such as last year's 'North African Notebook', and now 'Journey to Siwa'?

The two other books promise less and disappoint less. Both contain a great deal of information, accumulated with much care and some discomfort, about two zones of Africa, Morocco and the Sudan, which lie uneasily under European protection. There is enough of politics in both books for the British to emerge slightly more creditably from Mr. Langley's investigations than the French do from Mr. Landau's. 'No Woman's Country' is an easy, chatty book; statistics are agreeably sugared by conversations with Khalifas, ex-rowing-blues and their proconsular

wives. Much of it is most amusing, and its title and general good humour should not be allowed to obscure its importance, for it is the only general account of the Sudan to be published for nearly thirty years. Mr. Landau is less concerned with politics in 'Invitation to Morocco' than with describing precisely what he witnessed in kasbah and souk, mosque and palace. His book is full of dances, crowd-scenes, snake-charmers, Sultans and strange meals. It is a great bubbling vat of personal experience, in which one can dip with a ladle for hours on end and always bring up something new.

NIGEL NICOLSON

THE ENIGMATIC CENTURY

'Seventeenth Century English Literature', By C.V. Wedgwood. Oxford. 5s.

It is reasonable to assume that when Professor Grierson published his great edition of Donne's poems in 1912 he had no notion of what was to be the consequence of his action. He had in fact set in motion what we can see now was a whole revolution in taste: the poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century was rediscovered, and the rediscovery meant a radical change in our idea of poetry and therefore in current ways of writing it. Yet it cannot be said that the rediscovery has enabled us to see the literature of the century as a whole any more clearly. In a phrase that has become notorious, Mr. Eliot once spoke of "the Chinese Wall of Milton". But for most of us the century appears to be full of Chinese walls, scarcely explicable breaches in continuity, contrasts that do not seem to permit of reconciliation: the tragedies of Webster and Ford at the beginning of the period, the comedies of Congreve and Farquhar at the end; the prose of Burton, and the prose of Dryden; and so on. And lying across the middle of the century, the greatest Chinese Wall of them all, the Great Rebellion and the Commonwealth.

In recent years, Mr. Eliot's particular Chinese Wall has crumbled somewhat; and it is the great merit of Miss Wedgwood's book, the latest addition to the Home University Library, that under her learned gaze other Chinese Walls crumble also. Here her experience as a historian stands her in excellent stead. Her assessments of individual writers - and there are precious few of any moment whom she does not mention - are always felicitous and sometimes more than that. She is, for instance, especially perceptive on Phineas and Giles Fletcher ("The interest and glory of the Fletchers - no small glory either - is to provide the link between the two greatest epic poets of the English language. It is in their work that the gigantic and dissimilar geniuses of Spenser and Milton are brought, for a moment, edge to edge".), on the importance of Jonson as a lyric poet and on Dryden ("However different the surface of his work, his ways of thought were closer to those of Milton and closer to those of his Caroline predecessors than to those of Pope"). And her style is quite admirably suited to its purpose: she is afraid neither of wit nor of the occasional poetic metaphor.

Yet the real distinction of this book lies in Miss Wedgwood's historian's sweep, the discoveries that one feels she has made through her special function as a historian, through the patient amassing and scrutiny of the documents in the case. A shining instance is her treatment of the evolution of prose from the latinate sentence-structure and Ciceronic eloquence of the Jacobeans to the conversational ease - and how much more - of Dryden. I doubt if a better or more convincing exposition of the change has ever been written. She is content with no easy reference to the growth of science and the Royal Society. She places the turning point in prose where, quite obviously, she has found from her readings in seventeenth-century political and polemical writings that it belongs: the years of the Great Rebellion:

> ..The new violent conditions worked more strongly on prose, for prose, whether spoken or written, public or private, was the foremost weapon of conflict and nothing sharpens prose like the necessity to do battle with it.

WALTER ALLEN

NEW NOVELS

'Gaëtan'. By Edith de Bron. Chapman and Hall. 8s. 6d.
'The Twenty-Firth Hour". By C. Virgil Gheorghiu. Heinemann. 10s. 6d.
'I Don't Mind If I Do'. By Elspeth Huxley. Chatto & Windus. 9s. 6d.

This is a week of extremes, the foreign contribution very foreign, the native one very, very English. 'Gaëtan' is at one end of its category: it is brief and runs without a break, being simply a conversation between two women about Gaëtan, husband of one and ex-lover of the other. His death provokes their meeting for the first time, and they sit up all night discussing the man and their feelings for him. Nothing emerges from the talk. Indeed, the weakness of the book is that it is difficult to remember anything much about it the next day: this sort of thing needs immense sureness of touch not to become merely word-spinning. Nevertheless, it has a curious authentic flavour, a natural and civilised foreignness which is agreeable. Much more agreeable than 'The Twenty-Fifth Hour', which is foreign in quite the opposite way. Instead of the highly refined, ingrown probings of a lady who, as the blurb explains, has Austrian, Hungarian and Italian ancestors, is married to a Frenchman, and "could be described as a true European", we have a fervently pessimistic Rumanian writing the epic of man against the modern world. The theme of the book is that a new order has arisen, the Technological State; its gods are the machines, who have created man in their own image, and the old virtues of charity, consideration, fellow-feeling are on the way out. In the new order they have no place. It is a perfectly fair statement of the anti-materialist point of view; but after the twenty-firth repetition the point is more than taken, and one feels inclined to argue back. Much the best part of the book is the pilgrimage of its hero, a peasant called Johann Moritz, through the various labour and concentration camps of Europe over the last dozen years. Mr. Gheorghiu knows about this, and writes simply and with authority about it; though Moritz is a cipher, as all such figures tend to be, his adventures are above all interesting. It is when Traian, the intellectual appears, and delivers long quotations from Auden, Eliot and other more obscure pundits, that the reader grows restive; and the device of a character writing a book which is apparently the book one is reading is needless and tiresome.

So different from the home life of our own dear Queen; one passes to 'I Don't Mind If I Do'. This comes into the class of what Miss Lesley Storm calls Vicious Thirkell. Irma, the heroine, returns to her home village after several decades, and promptly begins to recollect the life she led there as a girl. Mother kept wolfhounds, father was a General; her best chum, Iris Skinner, lived up at the Manor and had character. There are comic locals and shrewd grooms, a dotty vicar, too much port during carol-singing, a Fete and an elopement. This occupies half the book, and there is really not much to be said about it. Nancy Mitford got there first and did it better. The second half is a departure (farcial progressive school, fun among the back pages of THE NEW STATESMAN) but, I found, on the whole unfunny. In any case, the book does not survive the Winter's Tale break: Irma is such a shadowy figure in the first half that one is not prepared to accept her in the second as a major character. Mrs. Huxley has a lovely style, plenty of observation and a gift for story-telling. It is depressing to find her wasting her time writing mildly amusing stuff to be chuckled over between York and London on a slow train.

FRANK HAUSER

John Lehmann

published yesterday two novels of outstanding interest. In reading Pierrot (9/6) you will understand why Raymond Queneau is held to be one of the most humorous, poetic and original writers in France today. Seamy, a first novel by Roland Camberton (9/6), will introduce you to a highly entertaining gallery of rogues, Bohemians and down-and-outs (who are more down or out) in London's night-world....

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'A Librarian Looks at Readers'. By Ernest Savage. The Library Association. 15s.

This is a new and expanded edition of a librarian's classic, first published in 1947. Dr. Savage, a past-President of the Library Association, has spent his life stalking coy readers in the alcoves of his libraries, cajoling, hinting, suggesting, but never outwardly disapproving even of the readers he dislikes most, - the narcotic, 'pastime' novel readers, who in the London area alone borrow more than eleven million novels a year. To him the most rewarding readers are the odd, shy ones, the children and farm-labourers, and the tired office-worker with a sneaking interest in astronomy. Dr. Savage's reminiscences, which are highly entertaining as well as thoughtful and instructive, describe the mysterious unfolding and closing of taste and interest, and the part librarians can play in fanning small sparks into a flame.

THE IMPERISHABLE

It has sometimes been said that Admiralty count upon the quality of their men to make up for a want of it in the gear provided for their use. Any case going to show that no such cynical policy is theirs ought to receive attention, as tending to soothe the perhaps wounded feelings of their Lordships; and as supporting the morale of such of our fellow citizens as are naval officers or ratings.

One of the most valuable privileges of the naval rating is, or used to be, that of buying his clothes from the branch of the Stores Department known as Slops. He is there able to do what no other Englishman can do, buy garments for what it costs to make and transport them, that is at about one-third of the retail price. When, just over four years ago, I learnt that I was to be demobilised, I did what every other naval man in like case did also, spent every possible penny in the Slops so as to postpone the evil day when I should again, at extravagant cost to myself, be forced to contribute to my draper's costs, profits and income tax. Among the articles purchased, for, I think, less than a shilling a pair, were three pairs of blue woollen socks.

It is necessary to explain my peculiar system with socks: if darning them be disagreeable, it is even more so to have to watch a woman do it. There is something in the spectacle of a woman darning one's socks, however willingly, which conjures up all the horrors of Dickensian snugness, a large coal fire, a fixed cat, an atmosphere of somnolent and stertorous breathing following over-eating; in short, a moral, spiritual, mental and physical fug. With this atmosphere goes its associated ideas: one remembers the nineteenth century heroines, the Amelia Sedleys and Darling Doras, and the state of mind and law which reduced them to their exasperating condition of simpering and imbecile subjection.

At all events, the sight of a woman darning socks is so intolerable that, when the fabric of my own is to the holes in the proportion of land to sea upon this planet, they are discarded and a new pair bought. The cheapest socks, bought at the village post-office, do not cost much, but even so it must be admitted that the policy is not sound, being both wasteful and extravagant. Therefore the socks are not burnt. But, could they know their fate, they might cry, with Baudelaire:

"Bientôt nous plongeons dans les froides ténèbres
Adieu, vive clarté de nos étés trop courts!"

In short, we put them on the compost heap. And this, sometime during the summer of 1946, was the fate of the last pair of socks from Slops.

Already their singular endurance of abuse had drawn attention to their toughness; but their performance as garments was nothing to what was to come. The compost heaps are, with us, man-managed on a serial principle. A heap is completed, treated and left to rot, while another is started, and so following. When a ripe heap is carved up with a spade and its substance wheeled away to be used, such recalcitrant material as has not reached the requisite stage of a fragrant and elastic mould is cast upon the heap then in process of making, to undergo another treatment. Chunks of wood, the hard stems of certain plants, many roots, frequently need a couple of years to be reduced to their elements, to be, as plant pathologists say, ammonified.

It was not, of course, anticipated that the three pairs of socks would call for such treatment: on the contrary, it was supposed that by the summer of 1947 we should be eating them, suitably transformed by the activities of the nitrifying bacteria, or chlorophyl and of sunlight into peaches, grapes or, not to be snobbish, downright cabbages. Our surprise was therefore considerable upon finding them intact, indeed hardly even soiled, when the compost heap was broken up for use in the autumn of 1946.

Throughout the winter they were at the very heart of a new heap, which heated to a very high temperature and was, by the June of 1947, ready for use. Ready, that is, but for the socks: they were unchanged, and it was without conviction, for their fibres seemed to have suffered no deterioration at all, that we placed them at the bottom of a third heap, under approximately four tons of weeds, leaves, nettles and horse-dung.

There is no point in labouring the story; the socks have, at the time of writing, made part of no less than eight compost heaps. Upon breaking up the eighth a week ago, in a gratifying state of black and spongy decay, there were the socks, as good as new. In view of the sharp rise in the price of these articles during the past four years, consideration was given to washing them, overcoming an irrational dislike of seeing a woman darn, and wearing them again. In the end, however, they went into a ninth heap. If they ever do decay, the strength of growth which they will, no doubt, impart to some fruit-tree or shrub will make up for the delay. On the whole, however, we expect them to emerge from the ninth as from the first compost heap, in which case we shall present them to Admiralty.

EDWARD HYAMS

THE UNLOVED

I am pure loneliness,
I am empty air,
I am drifting cloud.

I have no form,
I am boundless,
I have no rest,

I have no house,
I pass through places,
I am indifferent wind.

I am the white bird
Flying away from land,
I am the horizon.

I am a wave
That will never reach the shore,

I am an empty shell
Cast up on the sand.

I am the moonlight
On the cottage with no roof,

I am the forgotten dead
In the broken vault on the hill,

I am the old man
Carrying his water in a pail,

I am light
Travelling in empty space,

I am a diminishing star
Speeding away
Out of the universe.

KATHLEEN RAINE

CORRESPONDENCE

WAGES POLICY

Sir, - Your article on wage policy, "Sanity or Scramble", suffers from a certain confusion. Is the problem merely to make capitalism work? Then we must have a million unemployed to instil youth and vigour into the system's creaking joints, arthritic with full employment, and the workers must cheerfully suffer a cut in real wages to make production for the home market less profitable and production for export more so.

If this is not our aim, then what is? Is it possible to devise both aims for a Socialist wages policy and methods by which it can be made to work? In defining aims, you fall prey to current "cake" economics, which would have us believe that we have developed statistical techniques capable of accurately measuring the present and future wealth of society and how it is divided, and that the production is independent of the division. "...trade unions cannot possibly be expected to settle (claims on a 'wages fund') among themselves," you say. But, alas, we are neither agreed on what a "fair" division would be, nor capable of measuring what is to be divided.

The brutal truth is that in the private sector of industry there is much to be said for leaving wage bargaining to the parties most closely concerned. The function of a minimum wage can be performed more effectively by increased family allowances and pensions, both of which would relieve workers with dependents.

There is, however, one field where creative Socialist experiment in wages policy is urgently needed - and that is in the nationalised industries and the civil service. The problem of differentials is largely a problem of incentives - incentives for people to work harder and more intelligently, to acquire skills and to move to those places where their labour is most needed. If we cannot replace "scramble" by "sanity" there, how can we expect to do so in the infinite complexity of the private sector?

80, South Hill Park, N.W.3. GUY ROUTH

SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS

Sir, - Having regard to the generous response of the British Universities to the plight of the African medical students whose bursaries have been withdrawn by the present South African Government, we would ask the hospitality of your columns to bring to a wider audience the need for support of the African Medical Scholarships Trust Fund.

Since 1941 the Government has awarded five bursaries each year to enable Africans to study medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. These were recently discontinued, but as the result of protests the Minister agreed to grant three bursaries for this year and next year only - until the proposed non-European medical school is opened in Natal. The accommodation which is intended for the school consists of a disused Army Camp near Durban, and it will be some years before this school will in fact open, with a resultant break in the training of medical men, desperately needed to cope, for example, with the high rates of infant mortality and tuberculosis.

African students encounter great difficulty in obtaining medical training. Not only are they restricted by the colour bar to two of the ten Universities in the Union, but the high cost of training debars most of them from embarking on a 6-year medical course unless awarded a bursary.

The students of the Witwatersrand University have agreed voluntarily to levy an extra 10/- a year on their fees towards the Trust Fund, which has been set up with the approval of the University authorities. They rightly

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fear this attack on the University's great tradition of non-segregation, and are determined to replace the bursaries, and if possible, extend them. They are supported in this aim by the students of Rhodes University in the Cape. But this levy by itself will not be enough, and a public appeal is being made to obtain donations to supplement the Fund.

The South African Students Association in London has been appointed official representatives of the Fund in the United Kingdom, and inquiries and donations may be sent to the Treasurer, 46 Napier Court, London, S.W.6. or direct to the African Medical Scholarships Trust Fund, University of the Witwatersrand, Milner Park, Johannesburg.

131, Cheyne Walk, S.W.3. PHYLLIS ALTMAN
THELMA GELDENHUYS
London Committee

MAKRONESSOS

Sir, - My attention has been called to the publication in The New Statesman and Nation of September 23rd of an extract from an article by Mr. Wolfgang Cordan which appeared in the Swiss newspaper Die Tat of July 29th and describing his visit to the island of Makronessos in the company of a foreign diplomat.

As the foreign diplomatist in question, I hope that you will give me the opportunity to dissociate myself publicly from Mr. Cordan's article.

Mr. Cordan remained with my wife and me the whole time that we were on the island and since we received many complaints of brutality and tortures from the inmates of Makronessos, we asked for evidence and marks. Only one man with a scar came forward but there was nothing whatsoever to support his statement that it had been deliberately inflicted. We saw no one whose bones had been broken and I may add here for the sake of completeness that we were allowed to see everything we wished on the island - only in the company of an interpreter - including the places which were indicated to us by several inmates as real torture-chambers, "ten times worse than Dachau".

COERT BINNERTS
United Nations Special
Athens. Committee on the Balkans

CONSCRIPTION

Sir, - The information given recently in a national newspaper, that, following upon Mr. Eden's suggestion of refresher courses for the Class Z Reserve, the War Office is examining the possibility of giving such training to a picked number of reservists next year, indicates that the testing time for at least some of the potential criminals - the objectors - is moving a little closer.

It seems likely that many potential objectors are waiting uneasily on the turn of events before becoming vocal and "showing their hands": the War Office (vide Michael Graham and Peter Meade) isn't quite so definite as it ought to be: and certainly large areas of the objectors' future situation are "fluid".

The general uncertainty was more understandable when the possibility of a general recall to the Colours was only a possibility; but now that a degree of refresher training has become probable for next year, we may find, with perhaps a few test cases, a hardening of attitudes on both sides. And consequently perhaps - who knows? - the potential objecting reservist (the last person apparently to be considered) will be told in practical terms where he stands and what arrangements are planned for him.

14, Oakhill Road, London, S. W. 16. V. F. PACKHAM

Sir, - PARTY MANNERS

The play that we praise in these sensitive days
Must be dull with good manners;
And whatever the plot, it must certainly not
In a party throw spanners,
Or the subsequent "razz" will be terrible as
An army with ban-ers.

ALLAN M. LAING

WEEK-END COMPETITIONS

No. 1,079

Set by Gerald Giradot

The usual prizes are offered for a printable limerick on any French town. Entries by November 7th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,076: Set by Naomi Lewis

The usual prizes are offered for a 4-line epigrammatic verse on 'The End of Summer: 1950'.

Report by Naomi Lewis

The quatrain was, as always, a popular form with competitors: the difficulty here was not only to provide the "ingenious thought" which the dictionary definition demands, but to avoid the "lying fall" which the subject seemed to invite. There were at least fifty variants on the theme: "How can that end which never was begun?" - including L.E.J's with its engaging opening: "For guineas I am eager to compete". Only one competitor so much as glanced at the present format of this paper: very delicate, I thought. The neatest political comment ("Doves all cry: Cucou!") came from Allan Borshell. A prize of 15s. is awarded to the author of each entry printed below; runners-up are Leslie Hale, Bernard Rebel, Veritas, Guy Innes, E.M., J. Aldridge, Joyce Johnson.

You were as nothing: we inter
The thing, if anything, you were.
Nothing for tears: but we no less
With tears deplore that nothingness.

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

So ends the "Summer" that wept at the spectacle
Afforded by virtuous nations' professions,
Who, thanking the Lord they were non-dialectical,
Aggressed, the aggressors, 'gainst counter-aggressions.

EDWYN KIRKBY

Laertes for Ophelia shed no tear,
She had "too much of water": and for you
Dry-eyed, we strew upon your dripping bier
Not for remembrance rosemary, but rue.

VIVIEN BULKLEY

Your lavish rains
Made beans fit for a prince,
Your water cleansed my raspberry canes,
Goodnight, Sweet Rinse!

A.M.P.

"All's safely gathered in" - too soon we speak:
After a bloody sowing who can tell
What harvest waits? This summer was unique
But not, alas, without a Parallel.

J.P. STEVENSON

The Ichthyolaters of Spring
Cried, 'What of Dehydration's sting?'
Which Carcharian faith so wrenched
This summer's heart that all were drenched.

ALLAN BORSHELL

Summer pursues the fleeing swifts
The thirsty land has had its fill
For half a day the cloud uplifts
That we may read the fuel bill.

L.G. UDALL

The summer has been vile and yet
We may draw comfort from the fact if
We recollect the rain, though wet
Was not, thank Heaven, radioactive.

H.J.R.

THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

THEATRE

Of all the theatrical modes, the historical-costume play seems to me the most difficult. It presents a problem of literary tact which is almost insuperable - except for a Master of language. Mr. Hugh Ross-Williamson has ventured on a play about Queen Elizabeth, which the Arts Theatre is presenting at the moment. He has avoided the more obvious dangers by taking a comparatively unknown incident in the Queen's life - the courtship of the Queen when she was already middle aged by the Duke of Anjou - and sticking closely to that. It is certainly an incident on which it must have seemed very possible to work. The marriage was a diplomatic plank in Burleigh's anti-Spanish foreign policy; Leicester, on the other hand was opposed to it. Not only was the Duke an unprepossessing young man - almost a dwarf with a thick, beaked nose; but the people would be bitterly opposed to the marriage on religious grounds; the massacre of St. Bartholomew's night, which common talk attributed to the Duke's mother, was still a living and bitter memory. The Duke sends ahead to pave the way for himself a handsome young courtier, Jean de Simier, with whom the Queen conducts a romantic affair of the heart. The negotiations are protracted; the Duke himself does not arrive; and the young courtier, to hasten things on, reveals to the Queen in a dramatic scene, the secret marriage of her favourite, Leicester. The shock of this makes up her mind for her. She summons the Duke and announces their betrothal at a State Ball, only to have the Duke walk out on her, called back to France by political necessity in the middle of the proceedings.

The episode, then, lends itself well to the stage; the main difficulty is to find an idiom into which to translate it. Nor is that a question only of language. The speech with which Mr. Williamson provides his characters is plain and decent. It is not vulgar, but it does not strike one as adequate, either to the personages or to events. But more than that is involved. The psychological terms in which the Elizabethans conducted affairs of the heart, and of state too, were plainly something quite completely different from the way in which we conduct such things now. To have got some way towards expressing that would have been to meet the real problem. As it is the effect of the play is of a rather trivial modern drawing-room flirtation between an older woman and a younger man, which only succeeds in reducing the Past to the level of a sort of Gertrude Lawrence romantic comedy. Not that Mr. Williamson has conceived it like that, but that in default of language or atmosphere to correct the slide, it inevitably slips into being so.

The Elizabethan is of all historical periods the one that lends itself least easily to the modern transposition. For it is the one period which had a convention of its own for dealing with the historical play - and this comparison is bound to be in our minds all the time. And then again, as a character, Elizabeth herself is of a fascination and a magnitude which would deter all but the foolhardiest. The temptation is obvious, but it is hardly surprising that this version is unsatisfying.

Miss Catherine Lacey makes a grand effort with the Queen. Her first entrance, with that red hair and deadly pallor, with the regal habit of command giving her a strikingness that transcends her appearance, promises the best. But it is all the way along a losing battle that she is fighting. The tempests of rage and hysteria haven't inside them a solid enough core of character to work on us as they should. For the rest this style of romantic acting is always in danger of tushery clichés. Diplomats of the old time must somehow avoid reminding us of tituppy bell-weathers. Romantic young men mustn't, in their poses, recall to us those French picture postcards we send our friends as a joke. And how even good modern actors are shown up in their gestures and their carrying of themselves when you put them into tights and cloaks! While by no means entirely avoiding these faults, Mr. Vernon Greaves, Mr. Eric Berry, Mr. Wolf Morris and Mr. Richard Golden did well. A pleasant set helped the atmosphere, but the unavoidably small scale production at the Arts hindered it.

At the Palladium for a season there is a revue led by a comedian new to us, though familiar enough to radio audiences. Mr. Frankie Howerd looks like a cross between Mr. Peter Ustinov and Mr. W.H. Auden. Hair disordered, hands outstretched as if supplicating our indulgence, he advances on the microphone and beguiles us with long, funny stories which ramble through a maze of self-interruption. It is a very talented act, which relies on nothing but the comedian's engagingly disordered personality. Mr. Howerd is a distinct find. The rest of the show is agreeable and light-hearted but misses the first class. Mr. Nat Jackley does his best with poor material, while Miss Binnie Hale, trying to adapt her art to the size of the Palladium, waters it down a little too much in the process.

T.C. WORSLEY

MOVIES

The most notable film of the last three weeks has been John Huston's "The Asphalt Jungle" (Empire). This is the story of six men who plan and execute a jewel robbery in an American mid-western city, then lose themselves in intrigues over the spoils, and one by one encounter separate retributions. The film is at once a revelation of character and of the collective atmosphere of the American underworld, which Huston presents as a ruthless business organisation, a little totalitarian regime which judges a man solely on his usefulness and qualifications and subordinates all relationships to this end. Here the dictator is a middle-aged German "doctor", stiffly courteous, mild-spoken, who pre-plans with an almost pedantic thoroughness and regards young girls with calm lechery: the fence is an ingratiatingly crooked lawyer with a bed-ridden wife and a blonde popsy: the "hooligan" a grim young Southerner who dreams one day of returning to the farm where he was born. With these three characters, excellently played by Sam Jaffe, Louis Calhern and Sterling Hayden, "The Asphalt Jungle" is at its best: the others are more sketchy and more conventional. They reflect most obviously, perhaps, Huston's ambivalence towards his material. He seems both fascinated and appalled by his own revelations, and so they remain incomplete; on the surface his film has a tense objectivity, penetrated occasionally by a tentative gesture of humanity or irony. The result is that, although every scene is realised with a spare and vivid concentration, the film as a whole fails to define its intentions.

"The Magnet" (Odeon) suffers from complete indecision. Its author, T.E.B. Clarke, has at once created and destroyed a promising idea. A small boy, away from school because he is in quarantine for scarlet fever, meets a smaller boy on the beach and tricks him into giving up a large and powerful magnet. Stricken with remorse, he tries to dispose of the magnet, but each time it is returned to him: finally he gives it to a man who is trying to raise money to build an iron lung. But circumstances contrive to sustain the boy's guilt complex: he is led erroneously to believe that the smaller boy died from scarlet fever after meeting him, and he runs away from home under the impression that he is wanted by the police. The story has possibilities of charming fantasy and fable, but is vitiated by a disagreeably patronising attitude towards children. The "Uncle Mac" tone prevents any proper exploration of the boy's feeling, and William Fox's performance does not suggest any natural talent; halfway through, the film branches off to some facetious incidents concerning the boy's father, a psychologist, who makes a complicated diagnosis of his behaviour. The adult figures are not characterised at all, and a general lack of purpose is further pointed by the direction (Charles Frend), which is clumsy and theatrical.

GAVIN LAMBERT

ENTERTAINMENTS

THE Attic Players. Euripides' "Alcestis", transl. by Philip Velacott, City Literary Inst. Theatre, Stukeley St., Drury Lane, Nov. 2, 3, 4, at 8 p.m. Tickets 3s.6d., 2s.6d. fr. J... Hamilton, Dulwich College, S.E.21., or Tel: GIP.5636.

INTERNATIONAL Dance. Youth House, 250, ...uston Road, N.W.1. Sat. 28th, 7.30 p.m. Admission 2s. Buffet.

EXHIBITIONS

STATUETTES (Life Studies in Wood) by Robert Flint, R.M.S., also Paintings & Drawings by Contemporary Artists at Kenneys Art Gallery, 1st Floor, Kenneys Restaurant, 23 Old S... ...e, Brighton. Oct. 23 - Nov. 10. 10.30-6.30, Sundays included. Admiss...n free.

FRENCH Master Drawings of the 18th Century at the Matthiesen Gallery, 142, New Bond Street, 10-5.30. Sats. 10-1.

A.I.A. Gallery, 15 Lisle St., Leics. Sq., Paintings by Ilsa Rodnell; daily 11-6 including Saturdays.

LECTURES & MEETINGS

SCOTT'S Last Expedition. A lecture by Admiral Lord Mountevans, K.C.B., D.S.O., LL.D., for St. Marylebone Pub. Libraries, at Stern Hall, 33 Seymour Place, Marble Arch, on Mon., Oct. 30 at 8 p.m. Admission free.

UNIVERSITY of London: A course of three lectures on "The Study of the Plastic Art of the Belgian Congo - Methods and Results", by Profes. Dr. F. M. Olbrechts (Musee du Congo Belge, Tervuren, Belgium) at 5.30 p.m. on Oct. 30, Nov. 1 and 3 at University College (Anatomy Theatre), Gower St., W.C.1. Admission free, without ticket.

LORD Layton speaks on "Strasbourg": Royal Empire Society at 1.30 p.m. Mon., Oct. 30. Adm. free. Reserved seats 2s.6d. or 1s. from Liberal International, 39, St. James's Place, London, S.W.1. Tel: REG.6956. Tickets for buffet lunch, 4s.

I.L.P. "Gunpowder and other plots". F.A. Ridley, Sun. Nov. 5, 3 p.m., Barclay House, 783 Finchley Rd., N.W.11 (No. 2, 28, 645, 660 buses).

LINGUAFILM - The new method of learning languages with sound films -Demonstrations every Monday, 3, 6 & 8 p.m. at 20 Buckingham Street, W.C.2. Admission 2s. 6d.

SCHOOL for Fathers (Wolf-Ferrari): lecture-recital by James Robertson (with Marion Studholme, Anna Pollak, Howell Glynne, Hervey Alan and Stanley Clarkson of Sadler's Wells Opera Co., pres. by Finsbury Public Libraries. Finsbury Tn. Hall, Rosebery Ave. E.C.1. Tues. Oct.31, 7.30. Admission free.

MISS Sylva Norman will speak on "At The Tomb of Shelley", November 3, at 17 Great Cumberland Place, Marble Arch, 3.15 p.m. All welcome.

PERSONALIST Group. Prof. George Catlin on "Personalism, Essentialism, & Orthodoxy". Conway Hall, Thursday, Nov. 2 at 7.45 p.m.

NEW Europe Group Lects. Nov.9 The Frustration of Science: Prof. Fredk. Soddy, F.R.S.; Nov.30 Monetary Reform and the Leviathan State: Mrs. Gladys Bing. College of Preceptors, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1, 7 p.m.

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1. Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. October 29: Archibald Robertson, M.A., "The Moral Consequences of Atheism."

CONWAY Discussion Circle, South Place Ethical Society. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Weekly discussions in the Library on Tuesday evgs. at 7 p.m. Oct. 31: Guilfoyle Williams, B.Sc., "The Case for Re-incarnation." Admission free. Collection.

THE Truth about Liberty. H.J. Blackham at 11 a.m., Oct. 29, The Ethical Church, 4a Inverness Place, W.2.

THEOSOPHY, Public Lect., Sundays 7 p.m. United Lodge of Theosophists, 17 Great Cumberland Place, Marble Arch. All welcome. October 29: The Significance of Cycles.

SOCIETY for Understanding Our Eternal Individuality and Its Effect on Material Experience, presents Lecture - "Our Cause and Effect and Where It Has Brought Us" by P. Barnsby at 8 p.m., Tues., October 31, Caxton Hall, adj. St. James's Pk. Stn. Adm. 1s.6d. Advance reservation obtainable from Soc. Sec., 66 Lakeside Road, W.14.

BUDDHIST Society, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.1. Public lect. Oct. 31, 6.30 "Buddhist and Western Psychology". Mr. Christmas Humphreys.

GEFFRYE Museum, Kingsland Rd., E.2. Lect. Series by John Summerson on "English Taste". (4) Oct. 31, 7 p.m. 20th Cent. - Taste & Authority.

SAT., Oct. 28, 4 p.m., Lectures on German Publications, and 2 p.m., opening of Reading Room (German newspapers, periodicals - literat., art, music, sciences, trade papers, etc.), 1 Broadhurst Gdns., N.W.3. (nr. Finchley Tube Stn.). Adm. free. Sats. from 2-6. By arr. with Library of German Language, Admin.: 4B Belsize Grove, N.W.3.

ACCOMMODATION VACANT & WANTED

24 Cornwall Gdns., S.W.7. WES. 6522. Superior service rooms in well-appointed house with personal supervision. Food a speciality. To inc. full breakfast. Single from 3½ gns. Dble. from 6 gns. Dinners optional.

HOLLAND Park. First floor balcony furn. flat to let for 12 months or longer, 1 double bedroom, 1 large lounge, dining room, kitchen, tel., share of bath. Rent 3½ gns. per week. Box 9257.

LARGE comf. well furn. bed-sitting rm. with all conv. Gentleman pref. MAI. 0157. 12, Canfield Gardens, Flat 5, N.W.6.

THAXTED. A small half-timbered house to be let to careful tenants for the winter. Period furniture. Garage, garden. Convenient daily bus to London. Mrs. B. Hawker, Thaxted, Dunmow, Essex.

HAVE a safe retreat - 2 rooms in country house. Rent £100 per annum for three years. Box 8931.

YOUNG professional man requires board residence, in/near Walthamstow, E.17. Box 9163.

WILL I find a benefactor who will give middle-aged couple, Jewish, separated for years through lack of accom., the chance to reunite by letting to them a small flat in London, also at a reasonable rent. Gd. references. Box 8193.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT

SURREY County Council. Educ. Ctee. Applicns. invited from men with good educational qualifications for appointment as Asst. Youth Employment Officer at the Sutton and Banstead Youth Employment Bureau. Admin. exp. and social work among young people are desirable. Sal. £440 x £15 - £485 plus London allowance. Further particulars and forms of applic. obtainable on receipt of s.a.e. (2½d.) from the Chief Education Officer, County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey.

THE National Union of Students invites applics. for the positions of Vacation Work Organiser and Assistant Vacation Work Organiser. Details of appointments will be sent on applic. to the General Secretary, N.U.S., 3 Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1.

NORWOOD C.L.P. (New position). Applics. are invited for post of full-time Secretary/Agent. Sal. and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms may be obtained from Alderman W.R. Knight, 88 Beechdale Road, London, S.W.2. to whom they must be returned not later than November 7, 1950.

LONDON Vegetarian Society. Applics. are invited from Vegetarians for post of Secretary to above Society and Editor of the "Vegetarian News". Sal. according to exp. Applics. to the Chairman of the Executive Committee, L.V.S., 9 Adam Street, London, W.C.2.

QUALIFIED English Secretary with some academic training reqd. Interesting and varied post. Knowledge of Swedish an advantage. Detailed applications to The Swedish Institute for Cultural Relations, 49 Egerton Crescent, London, S.W.3.

PADDINGTON Group Hospital Management Ctee. Junior Clerks reqd. at:- (1) Group Headquarters (Finance Dpt.) - Male. School cert. standard. Good prospects for advancement within the Health Service and for prof. qualification (A.H.A.). Sal. £145 at 16 - £415 at 32. (2) West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Welbeck St. W.1. Female. Knowledge of shorthand and typewriting. Good opportunities for promotion. Sal. £118 at 16 - £338 at 32. Also required: - (3) Group Headquarters - Copy Typist. Good speed essential. (4) Portman Clinic (Inst. for Scientific Treatment of Delinquents), 8 Bourdon St., W.1.) Shorthand-Typist. Salary in each case in accdnce. with age and exp., from £118 to £338. General Division scale. Good prospects and interesting work. Applicns. stating age, exp. and qualifics., tog. with names and addresses of 2 refs., to be sent to: C.R. Jolly, Secy., 285 Harrow Rd., London, W.9. by Nov. 4.

HIGHLY qualified technical man with Christian Pacifist convictions & progressive outlook, with view to directorship paint & plastics resinous chemical factory, offered house 7 rooms and salary £1/2,000 according to qualifics. & ability. Apply in confidence: Box 9002.

ASSISTANT Secretary/Shorthand-Typist required by chairman of leading cinema group with offices in West End. Applicants must have good speeds and be well educated. Age about 23. Write in confidence, giving full details of education and previous experience, to Box 8792.

EXPERIENCED Shorthand-Typist (Male or Female) reqd. by City Accountants. 5day week. Salary according to experience. Write Summers & Co. 3, South Place, E.C.2.

HOLLERITH Operator reqd. for research department. Previous experience and training in all operations essential. Commencing sal. £260-£320. a year, according to age and exp. 5-day week. Good holidays with pay. Pension Scheme. Canteen. Apply in writing to the Maintenance Officer, London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton St., W.C.2.

CERTIFIED teacher required in January for country school for maladjusted boys and girls aged 9-15. General subjects. Box 9422.

ATTRACTIVE opening (January, 1951) for Froebel teacher in progressive home school (4-11 years). Furnished flat available in Georgian house. Mother with child welc. Apply Baber, Convena House, Wadebridge, Corn.

APPOINTMENTS WANTED

WELL-educ. woman (26), exp. executive, secretarial, ctee. work home & abroad, German, French; History stud.; energy, imagination; seeks intg. responsible post with outlet for ability to organise, write concisely, undertake research. Prefs.: Publishing, Education, Fine Arts, Industrial Design, Travel. Box 8800.

MODERN painter seeks part-time teaching, progressive school, London. Box 8771.

EDUCATED M.C. or wife part-time, returning fruitless emigration N.Z., seek work in guest house/country hotel, S.W. Counties. 25 yrs.' exp. garden and glass, carpenter mechanic. Own jeep and caravan. Available end October. Box 8101.

MOTHER aged 28 desires residential employment, where daughter 3 years accepted. Educated, trained secretary, domestic exp. Mitchell, Kingsley Hall, Osgodby, Lincoln.

GIRL 25, Oxford Grad., shs. post London. Minimum £380. Previous exp.: Civil Service, Welfare, shorthand & typg. Priv. sec. pref. Box 9020.

SECRETARIAL post with M.P. or prog. organisation wanted by yng. woman active Labour member, intelligent, reliable, good organiser, shorthand, typing, costing, book-keeping, own typewriter. Box 9102.

YOUNG lady seeks cultural work, where extensive knowledge music, wide secretarial & some administrative experience will be used to advantage. Highest references. Box 9041.

YOUNG lady, 22, public school and Univ. Grad., First Class Gen. Hons. Degree, shs. interesting post, where languages and literary ability would be useful. Box 8944.

WOMAN graduate (32), B.A. (French), S.R.N., experienced sec., requires interesting, responsible, permanent post, London. Publishing, educational preferred. Box 8939.

WILL family take an interest and offer adaptable young man suitable post? Help with home, craftwork, livestock, gardening. Box 8936.

YOUNG Musician (22), composer, conductor, shs. position. Accept anything interesting anywhere. Box 8888.

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